

REMARKS

Upon entry of the amendments, Claims 1-16, 18-21 will be pending in the application. Applicants provide the following comments to the Office Action of December 9, 2003.

Drawing Objection

Figure 37 has been amended to be labeled as prior art. Applicants request that the objection be withdrawn.

Specification Objections

Applicants note the objection regarding the terminology of the specification. Although different language may be preferred, Applicants respectfully submit that the language used in the specification complies with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112. Further, a person ordinarily skilled in the art would understand the metes and bounds of the invention detailed in the specification. Hence, the objection should be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 12, 14, 15, and 21 are rejected as indefinite because of some antecedent basis and grammatical issues.

Claims 12, 14, and 21 have been amended to provide sufficient antecedent basis. The rejection of these claims should be withdrawn.

Applicants respectfully dispute that claim 15 is not a sentence. The claim begins with a capital letter, has a period at the end, and uses proper verbs in association with the nouns. If the

Examiner maintains this rejection, Applicants request that further clarification be made. Otherwise, this rejection should be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-16, and 18-21 are rejected as obvious in view of Bacchi (US 6,281,516), Nering (6,082,951), and EP 827185. The Office Action sets forth that Bacchi fails to suggest a driving plate and a controller. The teachings of Nering and EP 827185 are relied upon in the Office Action to address the failings of Bacchi.

Applicants have carefully considered the rejection and the proposed modification of the cited prior art. Applicants note that Bacchi discloses a tray positioning mechanism having a slidable tray (24). When the tray is moved, the roller bearing (126) contacts the first contact surface (140) of the latch (130), the clamping finger (132) rotates, and the hooked end (144) engages the beveled surface (72) of the carrier box (18). Further, the kinematic coupling pin (66) pushes the carrier box (18), and the scanning assembly (290) scans the wafer in the carrier. Applicants do not believe that modifying the teachings of Bacchi with the plate of Nering and the controller of EP 827185 would result in the claimed invention.

Applicants respectfully assert that the cited prior art fails to teach, hint, or suggest all the claimed features of the invention. The characteristic features of the independent claims are as follows:

- a) Claim 1 defines a lid holding plate “provided with a lid-detecting unit for detecting whether the lid holding plate is holding the lid or not,”
- b) Claim 7 defines a pushing member “provided on a surface of the lid holding plate on a side of the lid in such a manner that the pushing

member can give a driving force to the lid in a direction of moving the lid away from the lid holding plate against the engagement of the key element and the keyhole,”

- c) Claim 16 recites a lid holding plate connected to the driving plate via a forcing member, and the “forcing member is adapted to push the lid holding plate toward the lid, against the engagement of the key element and the keyhole.”

Applicants respectfully submit that the cited prior art fails to teach or suggest the above features of the respective independent claims. Therefore, a person of ordinary skill in the art would not find the claimed invention obvious in view of the cited prior art and the rejections should be withdrawn.


CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully request allowance of the application. If any additional fees are due in connection with the filing of this response, such as fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17, please charge the fees to Deposit Account No. 02-4300. Any overpayment can be credited to Deposit Account No. 02-4300.

Respectfully submitted,

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Signature:



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